United Nations S/2009/138

Security Council

Distr.: General
10 March 2009

Original: English

Letter dated 9 March 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report on the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Japan, in February 2009 (see annex).

The document was prepared under my own responsibility, following consultations with other members of the Security Council. I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yukio **Takasu**
Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations

09-26085 (E) 200309

Annex to the letter dated 9 March 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Japan (February 2009)

Introduction

Under the presidency of Japan in February 2009, the Security Council addressed a wide range of regional issues, including the situations in Chad and the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Iraq, the Middle East, Myanmar, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan and Timor-Leste. The Council held 10 official meetings, of which 9 were public ones, including an open debate on Timor-Leste, and 13 consultations of the whole, including an informal briefing by the Secretary-General on his recent travels. It adopted two resolutions extending the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping missions. The President also made four statements to the press on behalf of the Security Council.

Africa

Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion

On 13 February, in consultations of the whole, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Alain Le Roy, on the current status of preparations for the takeover by a military component of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) from the European Union force (EUFOR). The members of the Council welcomed the memorandum of understanding between MINURCAT and the Government of Chad on arrangements signed the same day on the transfer to MINURCAT of infrastructures currently used by EUFOR.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 17 February, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, John Holmes, briefed the Council at a public meeting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, illustrating both the potential hope for the country and the continuing dire humanitarian situation, especially in the eastern part. Following the briefing, the Council held consultations of the whole, during which members voiced serious concern about the humanitarian situation, condemned the brutal attacks against civilians by the Lord's Resistance Army and FDLR, and expressed their view that the protection of civilians must be a top priority. Council members called upon all parties to protect civilians and to fully respect international humanitarian and human rights law. The members also encouraged the Governments of the region to cooperate with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the planning and conduct of joint operations, and underlined the importance of accelerating the deployment of additional troops as approved by the Council in resolution 1843 (2008).

Sierra Leone

On 9 February, the Council held a debate to hear briefings by the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, Michael von der Schulenburg, and Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, on the situation in the country. The Executive Representative informed the Council, on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/59), of steady progress in key areas of peacebuilding and of a new, stronger integrated approach by the United Nations. Ambassador Majoor updated the Council on a review of the implementation of the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework, conducted on 15 December 2008. Ambassador Shekou M. Touray, the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, took part in the discussion, urging international partners to rally support behind the Agenda for Change and the United Nations Joint Vision. The members of the Council expressed support for those initiatives as well as the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, and the Executive Representative, while agreeing with his assessment that challenges remain in the areas of corruption, drug trafficking and youth unemployment.

Somalia

On 3 February, the President of the Council read a statement to the press in which the Council welcomed the election by the Somalia Transitional Parliament of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as President of Somalia, and expressed its strong support for the peace process and for this important step towards a political settlement in Somalia. It also commended the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for its important work, while expressing concern regarding the humanitarian situation in Somalia.

On 12 February, in consultations of the whole, the Council heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, who gave an update regarding the political process in Somalia, and by the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Susana Malcorra, on the United Nations logistical support package for AMISOM, on the basis of the Secretary-General's letter (S/2009/60). The members of the Council welcomed the recent political developments, while stressing the need to urge opposition groups which have not participated in the Djibouti peace process to cooperate with the new president, and to improve the security situation on the ground to allow the United Nations to have a presence there. The members of the Council appreciated the preparation of the logistical support package, while pointing out the need to ensure transparency and accountability in its implementation.

On 25 February, the President of the Council read a statement to the press in which the Council condemned in the strongest terms the attacks on the AMISOM base in Mogadishu on 22 February and the further reported attacks on 24 February. It also reiterated the Council's commitment to support a strengthened AMISOM, and commended the Governments of Uganda and Burundi for their contributions, while further welcoming the ongoing political process in Somalia.

Sudan: African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

On 3 February, during consultations of the whole, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, briefed the Council on the recent upsurge of violence in the Muhajeriya area of Southern Darfur. The members of the Council expressed their concern about the worsening security situation there and affirmed their full support for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the importance of ensuring the protection of civilians and the necessity for all parties to refrain from taking any action which could aggravate the situation.

On 10 and 12 February, during consultations of the whole, the Council discussed a draft presidential statement on the situation in Southern Darfur introduced by the delegation of the United Kingdom. Council members had differing views on the situation, and the Council took no action on the matter.

On 12 February, the Council also held an informal interactive discussion with a joint delegation from the African Union and the League of Arab States, in order to have a preliminary exchange of views on the possible decision by the International Criminal Court against the President of the Sudan, Omar Al-Bashir. Members of the Council expressed their support for the ongoing peace process in Doha and the efforts undertaken, to that end, by Qatar and the Joint African Union-United Nations Chief Mediator, Djibril Bassolé, as well as their hope that this process would lead to a comprehensive cessation of hostilities. Acknowledging the sensitivity of the issue, members affirmed that peace and justice should go hand in hand in Darfur.

On 17 February, in consultations of the whole, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations presented the latest progress report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of UNAMID (S/2009/83). The members of the Council, welcoming the agreement of goodwill and confidence-building for the settlement of the problem in Darfur, which was signed by the Government of the Sudan and the Justice and Equality Movement in Doha the same day, stressed the importance of making the political process more substantive and inclusive. In addition, Council members stressed their support for efforts to expeditiously deploy UNAMID, in particular through the tripartite mechanism, and the need for more support from Member States. Expressing their concern about the dire humanitarian situation, the members of the Council also insisted on better access to internally displaced persons.

Sudan: United Nations Mission in the Sudan

On 5 February, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, briefed the Council on the latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the overall situation in the country (S/2009/61). He offered the assessment that the overall security situation, while relatively stable, remained fragile. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, he stressed, had reached a critical juncture with just over two years of the interim period remaining, and the parties' strong political will, determination and decisive action would be required to consolidate achievements made since 2005.

Meeting afterwards in consultations of the whole, Council members affirmed the centrality of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for peace in the entire Sudan

and the importance of full commitment by all parties to implement the Agreement in the remaining interim period. They also conveyed their concerns about the security situation in some parts of South Sudan, emphasizing the role of UNMIS in addressing this situation.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 11 February, the President read a statement to the press condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks that occurred in Kabul on the same day.

Iraq

On 3 February, after consultations of the whole, the President of the Council read a statement to the press welcoming the holding of provincial elections in Iraq on 31 January.

On 26 February, the Council held a debate to hear a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Staffan de Mistura. The Council had before it the latest report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (S/2009/102). The Special Representative informed the Council that Iraq had taken a significant step forward with the provincial elections held on 31 January. He also highlighted the increasing capability of the Iraqi security forces over recent months and the improvement of the security situation in general. The Permanent Representative of Iraq, Mr. Al Bayati, then presented the views of the Government of Iraq on the report. The members of the Council welcomed the positive developments in recent months and expressed support for UNAMI in their statements.

The Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 18 February, the Council heard a briefing on the Middle East from the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry. He reported to the Council that a number of issues, including the humanitarian situation in Gaza, Palestinian reconciliation, and the new political situation in Israel, needed to be addressed for the peace process to advance and emphasized the importance of a durable and sustainable ceasefire as called for in resolution 1860 (2009). With regard to Lebanon, he noted that the situation remained relatively stable despite increased tension after the crisis in Gaza. During the consultations of the whole that followed, many Council members stressed the need for an effective ceasefire, unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance, opening of the crossings into Gaza and Palestinian unity.

Myanmar

On 20 February, in consultations of the whole, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari, briefed the Council on the results of his latest visit to the country. Members of the Council then exchanged views on the way forward regarding the situation in Myanmar.

Timor-Leste

On 19 February, the Council convened an open debate on the situation in Timor-Leste in the presence of the Secretary-General, who introduced his latest report on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (S/2009/72), and the President of Timor-Leste, José Ramos-Horta, who conveyed his gratitude for the support of the United Nations and reported on progress in the country. Members of the Council and the 14 other delegations that participated in the debate affirmed their support for Timor-Leste and the activities of UNMIT. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, Atul Khare, addressed the Council in closing remarks.

On 26 February, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1867 (2009), by which it extended the mandate of UNMIT until 26 February 2010.

Europe

Georgia

On the morning of 10 February, the Council held a private meeting with troop-contributing countries, during which participants heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Johan Verbeke, on the latest developments in Georgia. After the private meeting, on the basis of the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/69 and Corr.1), the Special Representative briefed the Council in consultations of the whole on the situation on the ground, followed by an exchange of views among members. In the afternoon on the same day, upon the request of a member, the Council again held consultations of the whole, during which a draft resolution elaborated by the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General was tabled.

On 13 February, following consultations of the whole, the Council adopted unanimously resolution 1866 (2009), by which it extended the mandate of the United Nations mission until 15 June 2009.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

On 27 February, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Dora Bakoyannis, briefed the Council at a public meeting on the priorities and activities of OSCE, followed by an exchange of views among members.

General issues

Briefing by the Secretary-General

On 9 February, the Council held consultations of the whole to hear a briefing from the Secretary-General on his recent visit to the African Union summit and several countries in the Middle East and South Asia. The Secretary-General touched upon the situations in Somalia, the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Guinea, Mauritania, Madagascar, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iraq and Gaza, as well as other countries and areas. The members of the Council

expressed their appreciation to the Secretary-General for his initiative in briefing the Council and had an exchange of views with him.

Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

On 27 February, in consultations of the whole, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator briefed the Council on his recent visit to Sri Lanka and provided an update on the humanitarian situation in the country. The members of the Council expressed concern about the humanitarian situation, including the plight of large numbers of internally displaced persons, and urged the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General, and his representatives on the ground to continue their engagement.

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On 12 February, in consultations of the whole, the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), Ambassador Baki Ilkin of Turkey, presented his 90-day report in accordance with paragraph 12 (g) of resolution 1718 (2006), which covered the work of the Committee during the period from 10 October 2008 to 12 February 2009.

Post-conflict peacebuilding

On 27 February, in consultations of the whole, the representative of the Peacebuilding Support Office, Sally Fegan-Wyles, updated the Council on the status of the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, which was requested in the statement by the President of the Council of 20 May 2008 (S/PRST/2008/16). She informed the Council that the final report will be issued by the end of May, and the members of the Council expressed appreciation for the briefing.